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BATMAN AND SUPERMAN



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March in Gotham City, and winter's icy grip refused to loosen.

COLD NIGHT.

YES...

THE TROJAN ICE CUBE

FREEZING
EVEN. A MOTOR
UNIT RESPONDING TO
AN ANONYMOUS TIP
CALLED THIS IN.
RECOGNISE
THEM?

YES,
ARCTIC, ICEBERG
AND POLAR—
MR. FREEZE'S
MEN.

Batman and Commissioner Gordon were joined by Dr. Adam Stoker, a specialist in cryogenics, the science of sub-zero temperatures.

ARE THEY
ALIVE?

NO
REASON
WHY THEY
SHOULDN'T
BE.

Stoker explained how, at extremely low temperatures, the human body went into suspended animation, a kind of long sleep.

I'LL KNOW
MORE ONCE I GET
THEM BACK TO
THE LAB.

KEEP ME
INFORMED.

After a thorough check of the crime scene...

MISSING
SOMETHING,
AREN'T WE?

YES. FREEZE
IS JUST TOO COLDLY
CALCULATING FOR
EMPTY GESTURES.

AND IT'S
TOO LATE TO BE
A CHRISTMAS
GIFT—

WAIT! A
GIFT... OF
COURSE!
WHERE DID
THEY TAKE
FREEZE'S
MEN?

A GOVERNMENT
RESEARCH FACILITY
CALLED THE **DEXTER**
INSTITUTE, BUT
WHY?

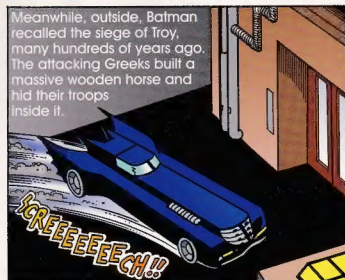
MEET ME THERE
WITH BACK-UP. I'LL
EXPLAIN LATER.

At the Dexter Institute...

WE'LL DRILL TO
WITHIN ONE-EIGHTH OF
AN INCH OF THEM, AND
SEE IF WE CAN GET
SOME LIFE SIGNS.

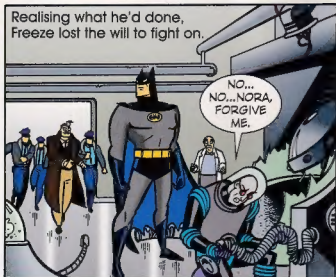
But, without
warning...

DOCTOR
STOKER! THE
CUBE...









RIGHT TO REAR
BATMAN
AND
SUPERMAN

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A story, by Metallo, starts ...

ONCE UPON A CRIME

Try and picture the scene. The speaker was Metallo, Superman's arch-enemy, and he had a story to tell.

"There I was at S.T.A.R. Labs a week or so ago. I'd been hired to steal the blueprints of this new experimental satellite defence grid they'd been developing, and I was just helpin' myself to them when suddenly I was surrounded by security guards.

"The guards were carrying these ion pulse cannons, right? Only just off the drawing board themselves. They're supposed to be able to punch holes through armour plating ten inches thick.

"Maybe they were even designed with me in mind. If so, they're gonna want their money back.

"But I'm gettin' ahead of myself. The chief guard gave me this hard stare and

said: 'Give it up, Metallo,' or something real original like that. Well, I just laughed right in his face.

"Or what?' I replied, and I tapped a finger right on my chest-plate, tellin' him to take his best shot.

"Some of the other guards were startin' to look real nervous, and one of 'em even glanced at his watch. You gotta understand, I wasn't real subtle about breakin' in. S.T.A.R. Labs has some pretty fancy security systems, and I just tore a big hole right through them. So the guards were thinking Superman must have heard something, and hey — he should have been there by now, right? But he wasn't.

"In the end, I made the next move. Not much of a move, really, I just folded the blueprints, turned and started walking away, back out the way I'd come in. I heard the chief guard shout something else stupid at me and then they started blasting.

"They were good shots, every one was a direct hit. And, well, it kind of tickled. I thought about goin' back and throwing them around a bit for the exercise, but where's the challenge, right?

"There's only one person worthy of my full, undivided attention, and that's Superman."

Metallo paused, clearing his throat. *Dramatic*, he thought to himself, *very dramatic*. He then continued: "I laid low for the rest of the day in an old power station, but Superman soon found me... just like I knew he would. Trouble was, he was too soon, way ahead of the cops. There was no



one else around, no one to witness our battle. See, it ain't enough just to beat Superman, I wanted the whole world to know I did it.

"So, when Superman touched down, I was ready. I knocked out the base of this forty-foot tall chimney and down it came — right on top of him. It didn't hurt him, but by the time he dug himself out I was gone.

"Night-time came, and I was in this automobile wrecker's yard. Junked cars piled ten-high on every side. I was waiting for the guy who hired me to come and hand over my cash, only he was late. I put on this act, like I was real annoyed, but the truth is, everything was going exactly to plan.

"You see earlier, I made this anonymous phone call to the police, and I gave them the whole deal. Where I'd be, who I was supposed to be meeting. So I figured by now there'd be cops crawling all over the place, just waiting until they were sure I had the blueprints.

"I figured there was one sure way to find out, and I wandered over to the nearest stack of cars, real casually. Anyone watching would figure I was just stretching my legs. You know, working the kinks out of my metal joints.

"Before they realised what I was doing, I'd gouged my fingers right into the metal panelwork of this old Ford sitting under a whole heap of other cars and pulled it loose.

"Of course, the rest of 'em came crashing down, and like dominoes the stacks on either side started to fall. Well, that flushed 'em out all right. All around me there were cops running for cover, 'cause it was raining cars. Chaos, total chaos — and I was loving it.

"Then, all of sudden, there was this whoosh of wind, and I smiled, because it meant he was here. I watched as he caught cars, stacking them back up as fast as they fell. And when he was done, he just hovered there above me in mid-air, giving





me this stern look.

"Hello, Superman," I said, and then hit him with the Ford. I hit him so hard the car disintegrated, but it got his attention. Security guards, cops ... not even worth workin' up a sweat over. But the Man of Steel, well hey — we're almost two of a kind.

"He came at me fast, probably knowing he'd only get so many chances to put me down, and I met him head on. The ground shook as we clashed, both of us scoring a pretty fair hit. No one was hurt, but then again, we were only just gettin' started.

"See, when I got my mind put inside this metal body, I may have lost the odd bit of humanity, but I gained strength and endurance that put me right up there in Superman's class.

"We knocked each other around for a while, pretty much trashing the whole yard in the process. The cops had pulled back to a safe distance, reduced to little more than

spectators. They figured Superman would win eventually, but they'd forgotten one little detail.

"Up till then I'd been holding back, letting Superman get real close, so that he'd think he had the upper hand. Then, when I'd got him right where I wanted him, I flipped open my chest-plate."

Again, Metallo paused, allowing the anticipation to build. "The blast of green energy hit him full on," Metallo said, "and he dropped like a stone. Kryptonite, the one substance in the world that can kill Superman, and I run on it.

"He tried to crawl away, but it was hopeless. His strength had deserted him, his invulnerability was a memory. I looked around and saw a metal compactor, one of those big hydraulic presses that turns cars into little cubes of metal.

"I picked up Superman like he

weighed nothing and tossed him right in. Then I wandered around to the controls, taking my time about it, giving him a chance to realise what was about to happen. You know, I must have told Superman I'd crush him on a hundred occasions, but this time I was really going to do it."

Metallo finally looked up at the audience that had gathered to hear his story. He expected to see expressions full of respect, but instead he read disbelief and mockery.

One large man, a convict by the name of Arnie Tyrone, spoke up.

"What a load of rubbish," he snarled. "I mean, if you beat Superman, how come you still ended up in here?"

The 'here' in question was Stryker's Island Prison. Metallo and several other inmates were gathered in the exercise yard of the maximum security facility, under the watchful eyes of a small army of guards. It was to these convicts Metallo had been telling his tale.

Metallo spluttered. "I ... I ... was unlucky, that's all. S.T.A.R. Labs came up with a way to neutralise my kryptonite power source, but not before I'd..."

But no one was listening anymore. Bored, the convicts started to walk away.

"The way I heard it," muttered Tyrone, "Superman took him out at that wrecker's yard without even working up a sweat, like he always does. What Metallo said, about him wanting a showdown with Superman, was all made-up."

Tyrone continued, "I think he only just escaped from the power plant hideout, where he thought

Superman wouldn't find him. It seems Metallo *accidentally* gave away where he'd be to hand over the blueprints. Sure, the cops and Superman were there, but only because Metallo messed up.

"And as for the kryptonite," Tyrone laughed, "it seems Metallo had used that trick one too many times already. Superman was wise to it and welded his chest-plate shut with his heat vision.

"In fact, the only reason Superman didn't turn up and get him at S.T.A.R. Labs in the first place was he was busy saving lives elsewhere. That Metallo — what a loser!"

Alone, a humiliated Metallo stared skywards. He saw a familiar figure rocket past, making a routine check on the inmates.

"One day, Superman," he muttered bitterly, "I'll get you ... for real."

THE END

